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**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**LINKING MOLONGLO VALLEY WITH THE REST OF CANBERRA**

Transport connections between the future residential area of Molonglo Valley and the rest of Canberra will be determined in the coming 12 months with \$350,000 committed in the Stanhope Government's 2006-07 Budget for a feasibility study, Planning Minister Simon Corbell said today.

He said this work was a crucial part of the investigations into the development of Molonglo Valley.

"The feasibility study will determine the major transport routes between the Molonglo Valley and districts of Belconnen, Woden, Weston Creek, the City and South Canberra," Mr Corbell said.

"The project will investigate potential road alignments and intersection options for roads connecting to William Hovell Drive, Coulter Drive and Bindubi Street to the north, Cotter Road and Streeton Drive to the south, and Lady Denman Drive and the Tuggeranong Parkway to the east."

Bridge crossings of the Molonglo River will be investigated as well as a proposed lake.

Bus priority measures and on-road cycling requirements will also be investigated.

"The result of this study will be a preferred option for transport connections for Molonglo, which the Government will then consider before consultation occurs to set aside land for future road construction," Mr Corbell said.

"The Government's Spatial Plan identifies the Molonglo Valley as the next major area for residential development in the ACT. The next steps in the planning process include a draft variation to the Territory Plan, an associated preliminary (environmental) assessment and, subject to the formal agreement of the National Capital Authority, an amendment to the National Capital Plan. It is intended that these documents be released for public comment later this year.

"This area will provide future residents with excellent, convenient access to existing destinations throughout Canberra as well as a range of retail, employment and recreational facilities within. The road infrastructure for Molonglo Valley will provide for cars, bikes and public transport."

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